

I am writing regarding Senate Bill 1012. I strongly believe that services to the blind/visually impaired community will be negatively impacted when BESB is consolidated with The Department of Education and The Department of Social Services. I believe that the services that BESB presently provides (such as mobility orientation, Braille instruction, and low vision services) are not able to be duplicated anywhere else in the state. The staff at BESB are highly trained and provide a continuum of services specialized for the needs of this unique population. I myself am totally blind and have benefited from the help and support of the agency while seeking and maintaining employment over the past 30 years. I am a licensed clinical Social Worker who is proud to serve as a staff member at BESB for the past 11 years. Without the help of this agency, it would have been almost impossible for me to maintain employment. Please consider maintaining BESB as a separate entity in state government- as it has been for over 100 years. Thank you.

Gerard Doody, LCSW